

779 which superseded and completed all previous ones. This final revelation is preserved for the use and knowledge of mankind in the Quran, the Moslem Holy Book.

The Quran embodies the principles in accordance with which a man's whole life should be lived; on the basis of those principles Moslem thinkers have erected a moral system covering every form of human activity, however seemingly unimportant. Thus the religious duties of a Moslem are unlimited and all-embracing; but certain of them are prior to others, and fulfilment of them is essential for every true Moslem. The most important of these are summarized in the so-called 'Pillars of Islam'. A true Moslem must testify that 'there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God'. He must pray five times a day; give alms to the poor; fast during the month of Ramadan; and make the pilgrimage to Mecca, should circumstances permit him, at least once in his lifetime.

Men should perform these and other duties primarily because they emanate from the will of God, but also because on their obeying or disobeying God's will depends the fate of their immortal souls in the next world. God who created the world will some day bring it to an end; on the final Day of Judgement all will be held responsible for their actions. The virtuous will be granted eternal felicity in Paradise, but the vicious everlasting torment in Hell.

829 779 The moral system of Islam covers the life not only of individuals but also of human associations, and among them of that association called the State. Islam knows no Church, and therefore no distinction between Church and State, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this world. The Islamic State is an association of Moslems for the purpose of living in accordance with the tenets of their religion and of extending its sway throughout the world. The law of the State is the law of Islam; the function of the ruler is to defend the State against unbelievers, to administer Moslem law as defined by those learned in it, and himself to be bound by it in his relations with his subjects. They for their part owe him loyalty as a religious duty. In short, the Islamic community as it has traditionally been conceived is to its members all and more than all that the nation is to the modern Western man. Islam in its great days was a nation, transcending distinctions of race or colour. Although an

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERNIZATION 61

Arabic-speaking Moslem might take a special pride in the peculiar relation of the Arabs to Islam, and in the dimly-remembered splendours of the early Caliphates, it is safe to say that normally he did not distinguish his being an Arab from his being a Moslem, and even when he did so it was the latter which was foremost in his thought and life. 779 829

3

For over a thousand years the majority of the population of Syria had been Moslem. There was not, however, complete unanimity in matters of religious belief. On the one hand, besides the Sunni or orthodox Moslems there were several heterodox Islamic and semi-Islamic sects: Shi'is, Druzes, Alawis and Isma'ilis. On the other hand, there still survived a number of Christian sects, Catholic, Greek Orthodox and others, which had come into existence in the early centuries of the Church's history; and there were in addition a comparatively small number of Jews. 162 795

Some of these communities were scattered throughout the country, while others possessed a local predominance in certain parts of it. Most of the districts held by these compact minorities were mountainous. The Lebanese mountains in particular were the homes of dissident communities, either because it was easier for the long-established inhabitants of Lebanon than for their neighbours of the plains to resist the pressure of Islamization, or else because sects which had grown up in the plains migrated to the mountains as an asylum where they would not be molested, or if attacked could better defend themselves. These mountain communities were marked by an especially unbending particularism and resistance to influences from outside.

4

Christians and Jews were left to carry on their own communal life without disturbance. For this there were two main reasons. The first was the Islamic doctrine in regard to Christianity and Judaism. Just as the Moslem regulated his life in accordance with the principles of his faith, so he did not deny a similar right to the Christians. 777 778

Moslems are not taught by their faith to regard Christians as inherently inferior, since it is in their power to become Moslems, and so enter the community of true believers in

777 which the only distinction is that of piety ; nor as adherents
 778 of a false religion, since Islam considers Jesus to have been
 one of the succession of true prophets. They regard them
 as having gone astray, first in taking the revelation of Jesus
 as the final and complete revelation, and secondly in looking
 upon Jesus not simply as a prophet, a man through whom
 God's word has come to mankind, but as God incarnate.
 It is the doctrine of the Incarnation, and therefore also the
 doctrine of the Trinity, which are for Moslems the stumbling-
 blocks in Christianity. As ' People of the Book ', believers in
 God, in prophecy and in the Day of Judgement, Christians
 like Jews are to be tolerated and to be allowed a certain
 status by the side of the Islamic community. But they cannot be
 regarded as members of that community. Nor can a Moslem
 willingly acquiesce in subjection to a non-Moslem Government,
 although his own weakness may compel a temporary sub-
 mission.

Such is the attitude towards Christians which Islam enjoins :
 an attitude of reasoned and well-defined tolerance. But it is
 not surprising that there should during the thousand years
 of almost unchallenged Moslem supremacy have been periods
 of persecution, nor that the ordinary Moslem should have come
 to feel a certain contempt for the Eastern Christians who
 were the only Christians he knew : the contempt which he
 who knows himself to be strong feels for those in his power,
 and which he who believes himself to possess the truth feels
 for those who have rejected it.

779 The other reason for the persistence of the Christian and
 798 Jewish communities was the existence of a certain view of
 829 the State : a view which was universally accepted in western
 Asia, and indeed far beyond it, until recent generations.
 According to this view the Government existed to defend the
 cultivated lands, to maintain order, to tax their populations,
 and for nothing more. The laws by which the life of the
 individual and of society was regulated sprang not from
 positive enactment of the ruler but from the religious doctrines,
 and ancestral customs to which individual and society adhered.
 It is true that since the ruling power was Moslem by faith, the
 Moslem religious law and the courts had a special relation to the
 Government. But a Moslem would no more have thought
 of compelling Christians and Jews to conform to Moslem
 law in matters of personal life and relationships than they of

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERNIZATION

63

abandoning their own religious codes. Law was personal. Not simply was there no concept of equality before the law; there was no idea of sameness.

For these reasons, throughout the period of Arab and Ottoman rule the Christians and Jews were allowed a certain autonomy. Each sect formed a community, or as it was called in Arabic a 'millah' and in Turkish a 'millet', within the State and co-terminous with it. In matters affecting the community, the Government treated with it as a whole through its heads, and not with the members of it individually. Certain civil functions were devolved upon the spiritual heads and representative bodies of the communities. They were allowed to administer the property and institutions of their communities and to decide matters of personal status—marriage, divorce, inheritance and so on—in accordance with the tenets of their faith.

This system originated long before the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. It developed gradually and was only formalized in the nineteenth century by a series of Imperial edicts. Throughout the period of Moslem ascendancy it succeeded in preserving self-respect and a sense of community among the religious minorities, although it may also have helped to perpetuate bitterness and suspicion between them.

The heterodox sects which clung to the fringes of Islam were in a more ambiguous position. Officially they were regarded as parts of the general body of Islam; but in fact the cleavage between them and the orthodox was almost as great as that between Moslems and Christians, and they like the Christians were usually left to direct their internal affairs in accordance with customary law and the precepts of their religions.

5

Since for Moslems and Christians alike consciousness of belonging to a religious community was the basis of political and social obligation, both were very conscious of not belonging to other communities; and the sense of distinctiveness led easily to suspicion and dislike. This was true also of every Christian sect in its relations with the others, for each sect formed a separate 'millet'; and of the orthodox Moslems in their relations with the heterodox. Difference of sect was

IV. THE WESTERNIZATION OF IDEAS

1

THE coming of the West aroused a new process of thought not only in Syria but in all the Arabic-speaking countries; this process originated earliest and has developed furthest in Cairo and Beirut, but exists in some form in the other centres of Arab life, and is a single process which does not admit of sharp regional divisions. Much of this chapter will therefore concern itself with the general movement of thought in Arabic. Moreover, it will be necessary for the sake of exposition to formulate theoretical standpoints more clearly, articulately and abstractly, and in sharper opposition to one another, than they are formulated by contemporary Arabic writers.

The civilization of the West revealed itself in many lights to the Arabs. It came to them asserting, in act if not in word, its own superiority and its contempt for the East; thus it aroused a sense of humiliation, the more bitter because the Arabs had for so long regarded themselves as the source of true religion and civilization. It came to them as a Christian civilization, and thus it compelled them to take a new view of Christianity and of its relationship with Islam. Again, although it was Christian, it was also secular, denying the theocratic idea of life and politics; thus it stimulated thought about the place of religion in society. It preached and practised a new view of human relationships; it was based upon an undreamed-of mechanical power and an unknown economic organization; it was prosperous and unimaginably strong. In these aspects it was to be feared as a force of oppression and destruction; but also perhaps to be imitated, since it held out hopes of an equal prosperity and strength. Above all, it appeared as a revolutionary force, threatening or promising radical change for worse or for better.

Some Arabs, among them many of the religious leaders, averted their gaze from the possibilities of the new world, and regarded it simply as a hostile force to be resisted; except in the remote places of the Arabian peninsula, this school of thought has now practically died out. There were and still are others who are so intoxicated with the splendour of the West that they are prepared to give up not only their own traditions but even their faith in a special destiny for the Arabs and Islam, and to become fully and uncritically

186 Westernized as soon as possible. But the greater number
 ● 829 of thoughtful Arabs have since the beginning of the Western
 197 penetration refused to go to either extreme. They realize
 that there is much that is good in Western civilization ; that
 their own civilization is ill ; and that its maladies would make
 it desirable, even did not its weakness make it inevitable,
 that it should be influenced and transformed by the West.
 But at the same time they can see clearly the faults in the
 West and the qualities of their own tradition ; more funda-
 mentally, they have faith that the Arab and Islamic peoples
 have creative gifts of their own and in consequence a special
 part to play in human history. Therefore their reaction to
 the impact of the West has been neither uncritical rejection
 nor uncritical acceptance, but a process of questioning which
 still continues : What can the Arabs become ? What can
 they do in the world ? What form and degree of Westerniza-
 tion will best serve to revive their creative spirit ?

000 The paragraphs which follow will summarize some of the
 answers which different groups of Arabic thinkers give to
 these questions. It must however be made clear in advance
 that the explicit views of particular thinkers are only one
 among several factors which will determine the answer which
 the Arabs give to these questions. Men brought up in the
 Arabic language and the Moslem faith, and in unceasing
 contact with the West in their thoughts and their lives, are
 forced by the nature of their situation to make judgements and
 decisions about the acceptance or rejection of Western ideas
 and ways ; these judgements and decisions are influenced
 or even determined by the Arab and Moslem standards of
 those who make them ; and having been made they involve
 others which perhaps had not been foreseen. Thus by a
 process of unformulated and unsystematic thought the
 structure of society gradually changes. A thinker of genius
 may alter the direction of that process ; but in the absence of
 genius, the explicit doctrines of the intellectual élite may
 have only a very limited effect.

177 The first task of the Arab thinkers was to understand the
 814 West. It was effectively begun in the days of Muhammad
 Ali in Egypt, has continued ever since and is still far from
 completion. Its methods are various : schools on the Western